

Message Text

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EXDIS

US ASAT DELEGATION 0016

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MIL ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PARM
SUBJECT: ASAT TALKS: SIXTH PLENARY, JUNE 15, 1978, 4. P.M.

SUMMARY. BUCHHEIM RESPONDED TO EARLIER SOVIET REMARKS
ON "UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES." HE SAID IT WAS PERHAPS CON-
CEIVABLE THAT SOME SATELLITES MIGHT BE USED FOR
PURPOSES CONSIDERED IMPERMISSIBLE OR UNLAWFUL UNDER
EXISTING AGREEMENTS, BUT IN US VIEW SUCH CONTINGENCIES
ARE REMOTE AND DO NOT JUSTIFY ASAT DEVELOPMENT OR
DEPLOYMENT, A VIEW THE SOVIET SIDE APPARENTLY SHARES.
HE NOTED THERE WERE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WITH RESPECT
TO SOVIET EXAMPLES OF UNLAWFUL ACTIONS WHICH TOUCHED
ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS FOR WHICH SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

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ARE NOT YET AGREED, AND STATED THAT THESE TALKS ARE
NOT PROPER PLACE TO DISCUSS SUCH ISSUES. BUCHHEIM
REITERATED US OBJECTIVE OF COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT,
INCLUDING PROVIDING FOR ELIMINATION OF EXISTING ASAT
SYSTEMS. HE STATED THAT ARMS RACE IN ANTI-SATELLITE
SYSTEMS HAS ALREADY BEGUN, THAT US WILL DO WHAT IS
NECESSARY TO PROTECT ITS NATIONAL SECURITY, BUT THAT

OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO TERMINATE THIS COMPETITION BY AGREEMENT.

KHLESTOV SAID THAT QUESTION OF UNLAWFUL SATELLITES WAS COMPLEX, AND USSR ALSO RECOGNIZED ACTIVITIES IN OTHER FORUMS. HE SAID SOVIET SIDE SATISFIED WITH ATMOSPHERE OF THESE CONSULTATIONS. MEETING ENDED WITH UNDERSTANDING THIS WOULD BE LAST PLENARY, WITH FRIDAY A.M. HELD OPEN SHOULD ADDITIONAL MEETING BE NECESSARY. END SUMMARY.

1. SIXTH PLENARY MEETING, HELD AFTERNOON JUNE 15, BEGAN WITH STATEMENT BY BUCHHEIM MAKING GENERALIZED RESPONSE TO KHLESTOV'S REMARKS DURING PREVIOUS SESSION ON "UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES." BUCHHEIM SAID US SIDE HAD TAKEN NOTE OF SOVIET CONCERNS AND SOVIET VIEW THAT A POSSIBLE AGREEMENT ON HOSTILE ACTS SHOULD TAKE THESE CONCERNS INTO ACCOUNT, AND WE WOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE THEIR VIEWS APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATION. STATES ARE ALREADY OBLIGED TO CONDUCT THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE EXPLORATION AND USE OF OUTER SPACE IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW. WHILE IT IS PERHAPS CONCEIVABLE THAT SOME SATELLITES MIGHT BE USED FOR PURPOSES CONSIDERED IMPERMISSIBLE OR UNLAWFUL UNDER EXISTING AGREEMENTS, THE US CONSIDERED SUCH A CONTINGENCY REMOTE AND NOT SUFFICIENT REASON FOR DEVELOPING OR DEPLOYING ASAT SYSTEMS. BUCHHEIM SAID IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING SOVIET SIDE SHARES THIS VIEW.

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HE CONTINUED BY POINTING OUT US SIDE HAS SOME DIFFICULTY CONSIDERING IN THE ABSTRACT WHAT OTHER KINDS OF ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE CONSIDERED BY ONE STATE OR ANOTHER TO BE IMPROPER OR UNLAWFUL. HE NOTED THAT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION EXIST WITH RESPECT TO WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED LAWFUL OR PROPER IN CONTEXT OF SOVIET EXAMPLES -- EXAMPLES WHICH BEAR ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS FOR WHICH SPECIFIC GUIDELINES HAVE NOT YET BEEN AGREED. QUESTIONS CONCERNING NECESSITY OR ADVISABILITY OF SUCH GUIDELINES CAN BE ADDRESSED IN OTHER FORUMS, AND THESE TALKS ARE NOT THE PROPER PLACE TO SETTLE SUCH ISSUES.

2. BUCHHEIM STATED US CONTINUES TO HOLD STRONG VIEW THAT OBJECTIVE OF TALKS SHOULD BE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT LIMITING ACTS AGAINST OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE, LIMITING THE MEANS FOR SUCH ACTS, AND DEALING WITH OTHER RELEVANT PROBLEMS, INCLUDING THE ELIMINATION OF EXISTING ASAT SYSTEMS. WE AGREE THAT IT IS A COMPLICATED PROBLEM AND WE WILL EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO BRING CLARITY TO THESE DISCUSSIONS. THE US DESIRES TO AVOID AN ASAT ARMS

RACE, FRAUGHT WITH HAZARDS AND INVOLVING SUBSTANTION EXPENDITURES. THAT ARMS RACE HAS ALREADY BEGUN. THE US WILL PURSUE ITS PROGRAM AS FAR AND AS FAST AS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN ITS NATIONAL SECURITY. HOWEVER, THE US OBJECTIVE REMAINS TO TERMINATE THE RACE AS QUICKLY AND AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE THROUGH AN ADEQUATE AGREEMENT.

3. KHLESTOV RESPONDED BY SAYING WE HAD LEARNED A GREAT DEAL IN THE COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS HERE. ON THE QUESTION OF UNLAWFUL SATELLITES, THE US HAS ALREADY NOTED IT IS A COMPLEX PROBLEM, AND HE SUSPECTED THE US POINT OF VIEW HAD UNDERGONE DEVELOPMENT IN THESE TALKS, ALTHOUGH THAT DEVELOPMENT SEEMED TO BE IN A SECRET

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NEGATIVE DIRECTION. THE SOVIET SIDE WAS ALSO GIVING THOUGHT TO WHAT OTHER FORMS AND FORUMS WERE APPROPRIATE FOR CONSIDERING THESE MATTERS. KHLESTOV EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE ATMOSPHERE OF THESE CONSULTATIONS, AND THE GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS THAT APPEARED ALREADY TO HAVE DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE DELEGATIONS DESPITE THE BREVITY OF THIS FIRST SESSION.

4. BUCHHEIM SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO ECHO KHLESTOV'S REMARKS CONCERNING THE ATMOSPHERE OF TALKS. US SIDE BELIEVED WE HAD MADE PROGRESS IN UNDERSTANDING OUR RESPECTIVE VIEWS AND IN DEVELOPING A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM, AT LEAST THOSE WHICH ARE EVIDENT AT THIS POINT. THIS IS A NEW AND COMPLICATED AREA; THERE WILL BE MANY VEXING DIFFICULTIES AND SOME FRUSTRATIONS BUT ALSO THE PLEASURE OF LEARNING TOGETHER. HE SAID WE MIGHT CONSIDER THIS OUR LAST PLENARY MEETING, HOLDING OPEN TOMORROW MORNING SHOULD AN ADDITIONAL MEETING BE NECESSARY. KHLESTOV AGREED.

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